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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Child's Drowning Motivates Cal Poly Student to Spread the Word on Beach Safety

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly senior Megan Grose is working to educate Central Coast residents and visitors on the issue of beach and water safety, an effort spurred by a Central Coast child's drowning.

Nine-year-old Kailanii Brannum of Arroyo Grande was swept out to sea and presumed drowned off Guadalupe in April.

Grose, a Cal Poly senior majoring in Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration, is completing her final requirement for graduation, a 400-hour internship with the Pismo Beach Lifeguard Division. Pismo Beach Lifeguards operate out of Cal Fire - Station 64 under the direction of Capt. Rick Howard.



Among other duties, Howard asked Grose earlier this year to coordinate water safety education at local elementary schools and develop beach safety brochures for area hotels. Those tasks took on new urgency and gravity, though, after Kailanii was swept out to sea while on a camping trip near Guadalupe.

"Kailanii Brannum's death truly reiterated the fact that people underestimate the strength and power of the ocean," Grose said. "I began working towards increasing Pismo Beach Lifeguards' public relations and education in February of this year, but Kailanii's death gave me the push I needed to convince others of the need for education as well."

Grose, who as a longtime lifeguard is already experienced at spreading the word about ocean safety, coordinated lifeguards' visits to more than 40 classrooms in first through sixth grades in Pismo Beach, Grover Beach and Arroyo Grande.

Meanwhile, the senior also researched water and ocean safety brochures in other areas, then designed and developed one for Pismo Beach. The Beach & Safety Guide includes beach policies, general and rip current safety tips, information on marine life, and interpretation of lifeguard flags.

The initial project plan developed by Grose and Howard called for 600 brochures to be distributed on an experimental basis. But after Grose made a successful presentation to the Pismo Beach Conference and Visitors Bureau, the bureau's board and Executive Director Suzen Brasile agreed to pay \$1,400 for additional brochures.

Last week, 15,000 brochures were printed for distribution to all seven of Pismo's oceanfront hotels and the visitor's information kiosk at the Pismo Beach pier. Plans also are in the works for the brochure to be included with house

rentals and distributed through visitor's bureau mailings.

"We have the ball rolling now, and I see Pismo Beach Lifeguards continuing to increase this community's beach awareness within the next few years," Grose said.

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